

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 TEL AVIV 001865

SIPDIS

NOFORN

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA (MAHER)
STATE FOR S/CT (AMB. CRUMPTON)
PENTAGON FOR OSD ISRAEL DESK OFFICER (ANDERSON)
NSC FOR DAS ROB DANIN
DHS FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR CRIS ARCOS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/11/2016

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [EG](#) [JO](#) [IS](#) [COUNTERTERRORISM](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL COUNTERTERRORISM BUREAU CHIEF REQUESTS HELP
IN DEVELOPING COOPERATION WITH DHS

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

SUMMARY

1. (S/NF) In a May 10 meeting with Ambassador Jones, Israel NSC Counterterrorism Bureau (CTB) Director BGEN Dani Arditi reviewed the structure and mission of the CTB, and requested the Ambassador's assistance in encouraging the Department of Homeland Security to develop operational cooperation with the CTB on counterterrorism (CT) issues. In addition, Arditi sought the Ambassador's interpretation of the Quartet's May 9 statement's meaning with respect to the issue of Palestinian Authority civil servant salaries, and asked for the Ambassador's thoughts on how the "salary crisis" will play out. Arditi showed the Ambassador a matrix that his office has compiled which tracks the status of various aspects of Palestinian life influenced by GOI policies, and lays out possible means and channels whereby the GOI can address problems. Arditi said that next week the GOI probably will authorize payments for Palestinians to receive medical treatment in hospitals in Jerusalem, including Augusta Victoria hospital. The Ambassador encouraged Arditi to consider how Israel could enhance its CT cooperation with Egypt and Jordan. END SUMMARY.

OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTERTERRORISM BUREAU

2. (S/NF) Arditi reviewed with the Ambassador the structure and mission of the Israeli NSC's Counterterrorism Bureau (CTB). He showed how the CTB coordinates with the Mossad, ISA, MOD, INP, and other GOI ministries on CT issues, and effectively serves as the Prime Minister's secretariat for all CT issues. Arditi mentioned that part of the NSC staff will move to Jerusalem to join the PM's office now that the GOI has been formed, but offered no details.

3. (S/NF) Arditi said that his CTB focuses on seven CT priorities, and is responsible for defining the threat levels to be observed at all of Israel's airports, ports, and border crossing points and internal checkpoints. The CTB is now focusing on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terror threats, and also has a small team that works on terror finance. Arditi said that on CT issues, he reports directly to Mossad Chief Meir Dagan, who then reports directly to the Prime Minister. During his briefing, Arditi focused on the following CTB activities:

A. Travel Warnings - The CTB's one-man intelligence unit integrates information on potential terrorist attacks and disseminates information to all of Israel's CT agencies. It submits weekly reports to the Prime Minister, and issues travel warnings. Arditi noted that on May 9, a travel warning was issued for Israelis in the Sinai, advising them that solid intelligence indicates terrorist groups intend to kidnap Israelis along the Red Sea coast and transport them to the Gaza Strip.

B. Israeli Homeland Security Technologies - The aim is to set up a working group that guides the development of such technologies. Arditi described this as a new initiative that will be presented to the GOI within a few months, along with a request for funding.

C. Protection of Transportation and Critical Infrastructure - The CTB addresses security gaps for air and sea transport, and is in charge of a long-range program to protect critical infrastructure. Arditi said that the GOI approved the critical infrastructure program a few months ago, and the CTB hopes to begin work on it soon.

D. Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and "Mega-terrorism" - The CTB is responsible for a special program to counter five types of "mega-terrorism." Arditi

described "mega-terror" attacks as those that cause mass casualties, significant economic damage, and/or have long-lasting effects. Arditi clarified that the CTB provides staff to the MOD on nonconventional terror, for which the MOD has national responsibility.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE ON COOPERATION WITH DHS

14. (C) Arditi said that the Prime Minister tasked the CTB over three years ago to develop operational cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security. Arditi expressed some frustration with not being able to fulfill this mission, and asked the Ambassador for help in encouraging the DHS to engage with the Israeli NSC. Arditi stressed that he was not complaining. He said the main problem for Israel is that DHS keeps changing its points of contact, making it impossible to plan anything out beyond one year. Arditi handed over a concept paper that he said DHS drew up and shared with the NSC via the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C. Characterizing the paper as a possible basis for re-engaging with the DHS, Arditi admitted that not all appropriate GOI agencies agreed with its content. Arditi stressed that the Israeli side is not looking for a formal binding agreement but rather agreement on four projects that DHS and the NSC will cooperate on in 2006-7. (NOTE: The DHS concept paper will be sent to NEA/IPA via FAX. END NOTE.)

CTB GRAPPLING WITH HOW TO ASSIST PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

15. (S) Arditi also asked the Ambassador to clarify elements of the Quartet's May 9 statement that concern direct assistance to the Palestinians. The Ambassador said that, contrary to some reports in the Israeli press, the Quartet did not call for the creation of a mechanism to pay Palestinian Authority (PA) civil service salaries. The Ambassador encouraged Arditi and his staff to think creatively about ways to get needed assistance (e.g., medical supplies) to the Palestinian people without going through the Hamas-led PA. Responding to Arditi's question about how the Ambassador sees the PA "salary crisis" playing out, the Ambassador said that the USG does not wish to provoke a civil war, but wants to keep pressure on Hamas, and that refusing to let it off the hook for payments to civil servants may help to turn the people against Hamas. The Ambassador stressed that our approach was similar to the use of "smart sanctions" against Saddam so that the Palestinian people were not punished for Hamas's uncooperative behavior.

16. (S) Arditi indicated that some time next week the GOI will authorize payments for medical assistance to Palestinians, to include payment for medical treatment at hospitals in Jerusalem, including Augusta Victoria. Arditi seemed open to considering the idea of mobilizing tax receipts to pay for medical care, with the payments being characterized as "stipends" for families. In this way, Hamas would not be able to claim credit for resolving the civil service salary crisis.

17. (S) Arditi showed the Ambassador a chart that he updates regularly that keeps the GOI informed of the state of various sectors of Palestinian life in the Occupied Territories for which Israel is directly or indirectly responsible. The areas highlighted as problem areas were disease, commerce in the territories, and employment in Israel. Arditi also showed the Ambassador another chart that analyzed possible options for payment of salaries, and possible channels for the payments. Arditi said that Egypt and Jordan might possibly seek to play a role in this area. (NB: Arditi was not advocating salary payments, but attempting to anticipate possible events.)

AMBASSADOR ENCOURAGES EXPANDING CT COOPERATION IN REGION

18. (S) The Ambassador encouraged Arditi to look at enhancing CT cooperation with Egypt and Jordan. Arditi characterized cooperation with Jordan as excellent, but said that Egyptian field contacts have been reluctant. The Ambassador suggested that the key is to reach out to the bureaucratic center in Cairo -- once it is won over, everything else should fall into place. Arditi noted that he is staying in Israel while PM Olmert visits the U.S. in two weeks so that he can be present during Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman's planned visit to Israel.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

JONES